

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

18. (currently amended) In combination, a circular blade and a A blade holder for cutting machines, said blade holder comprising:

a blade head secured to a lowering device and comprising a blade head housing having a chamber;

said blade head having a blade holding member;

a circular blade retained in said blade holding member;

an advancing device mounted in said blade head housing;

said advancing device comprising an advancing piston rod and an advancing piston actuating said advancing piston rod;

said advancing piston rod acting on said blade holding member for moving the circular blade from a ready position into a cutting position, thereby overcoming the force of a return spring acting on said advancing piston rod to press said advancing piston rod into the ready position of the circular blade;

said advancing piston actuated by a first pneumatic drive and mounted and guided in said chamber;

a pressing device for neutralizing the force of the return spring acting on the advancing piston rod during a cutting operation, said pressing device exclusively loading said return spring in a direction of the cutting position of the circular blade;

said pressing device decoupled from said advancing piston rod.

19. (currently amended) ~~A blade holder~~ The combination according to claim 18, wherein said pressing device comprises a slide engaging said pressure ~~spring~~ device and disposed proximate to said advancing device and the circular blade, and further comprises a second pneumatic drive for actuating said slide.

20. (currently amended) The combination ~~A blade holder~~ according to claim 19, wherein said slide embraces externally the blade head housing and is guided at the exterior side of said blade head housing.

21. (currently amended) The combination ~~A blade holder~~ according to claim 19, wherein said slide has a projection radially extending into said blade head housing, wherein said projection engages said pressure ~~spring~~ device positioned in a recess of said blade head housing.